



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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To: Assistant Secretaries  
Bureau Directors  
Solicitor  
Inspector General

From: Secretary

Subject: Providing Assistance for Firefighting Efforts

Over the last several days, the national wildland fire situation has continued to worsen. Significant large fire activity is reported in (nine) of the geographic areas and every state in the west with the exception of Alaska. Forecasts suggest, with extended drought conditions and thousands of acres of diseased forests plaguing much of the west and elsewhere in the country, all the factors are in place for yet another severe fire season.

The National Preparedness Level now stands at 5, the highest level possible. Nearly all firefighting resources have been committed.

Based on this level of activity, I am asking that all agency supervisors make all qualified personnel immediately available for fire assignments. Employees who are currently qualified to work in a fire assignment should check with their supervisors and then get in touch with the appropriate field, state, or regional fire management officer and make known their availability and qualifications. Employees with aviation, operations, logistics and finance backgrounds will be needed. If your employees are red carded, their first priority should be fighting wildland fire.

As we move forward toward the most active period of the 2006 wildland fire season, and as needs arise, all employees should support wildland fire emergencies within their respective training, qualifications, and physical abilities. Those who are not qualified or cannot support assignments away from home should support

local fire suppression efforts and provide backup for those who are able to go off-unit assignments.

I would also like to note that I understand releasing folks to assist in these fire fighting efforts, may affect the amount of hazardous fuels work targets to be accomplished this fiscal year.

I want to reemphasize that the safety of our firefighters is of paramount importance. No matter what the situation, firefighter safety comes first on every fire, every time. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.